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# The Girl with the Scar

By Ashley Brewer

I used to just be that girl, the one with “the scar,” or at least that is how I felt. But now, I am just “Me.” However, I can remember very well all the many times I was quiet, but in my head I was screaming, “Can I not just be me?” I can remember praying and wishing it would just go away. It seems so long ago now. Sitting in front of the mirror, tilting my cheek from one angle to another, looking at the thin faint curvature was nothing new to me. I had been looking at the very same mark for almost my entire life. It was more distinct, and more frequently noticed when I was younger, which of course was an issue then. Over the years it seems to have faded and is mostly only an attention grabber to those who are not used to it. Although still in plain sight, it goes overlooked by those who know me, unless they are trying to describe me to someone else, and then it is the first thing they mention. I just smile when they do that now. It does not bother me at all anymore. In fact, I have grown rather fond of the scar left from that night. I only know what I have been told. Really, what little I remember from that night is not much.

So here is the story. I was five, and it was my parents’ fifth wedding anniversary, or at least they were celebrating their anniversary that night. That was the reason that they left my little sister and me at the house with another couple they were friends with. I am pretty sure they will never forget that night. It was not fifteen minutes after my parents had arrived back at the apartment from their night out that the accident happened. I guess it made an awful noise, one that nobody could mistake as anything other than bad. I know they were all downstairs when it happened. Dad had said later, “Well not only did the loud crash scare me, but so did the sight of your pregnant mom running as fast as she could up the stairs!” They all raced upstairs behind her to see what happened.

When they got to the top of the stairs and to my room, they found me motionless on the floor. I had rolled off the top bunk bed in my sleep. Apparently, the couple watching us forgot to put the rail up, and I just went right over the edge. But, that was not the worst part of it. The couple also forgot to shut the dresser drawer after getting out our pajamas. While on my way down, I caught the corner of the open dresser drawer with my cheek. Of course, I continued to fall to the floor, and I tore my cheek nearly in half. With my mouth closed, both rows of teeth could be seen from the side of my face. The left side of my face looked as though it had been slashed through on purpose. The tear went from the corner of my mouth all the way up to my cheekbone. They, of course, took me to the emergency room. This is where one of my only memories from the entire accident and healing process occurs.

I was lying on a table or more likely, a hospital bed. A white sheet was draped over the top of my face. I remember looking down toward my feet. My dad was standing at the foot of the bed. I remember I got all excited, and I started smiling, talking to him, and waving my hands at him.

“Daddy! Hi, Daddy!” I said with a giggle.

“Your daughter is in shock. Her brain is trying to protect her in its own way from the pain and physical trauma,” the doctor said from somewhere on the other side of the white sheet. “The plastic surgeon will be in momentarily. I really hate to ask, of course, but you will need to wait outside. I will come get you as soon as we are done and she gets to the recovery room,” he said reassuringly, to try to comfort my parents.

I do not remember anything else. I know I had to eat baby food through a straw, so as to not undo my stitches. I have seen some pictures with a white bandage wrapped completely around my head and under my chin. I do remember a clear glass bottle with a big red E on it that I had to later rub on my scar. I guess vitamin E oil is supposed to visibly reduce the scar, and rubbing my cheek was to help the scar tissue. It took 575 stitches to sew my cheek inside and out. I have no other details about the accident or the physical recovery. However, I do have a great deal of memories about my scar after that.

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For several years, most of them were not fond memories. In grade school, the kids made fun of me, calling me names and making it a game to run from “Scarface” the playground monster. For a kid, it was a really big blow to be nominated and held as permanent playground monster. Nobody else ever had to be the monster! Then in middle school, I was not playground monster anymore, but it sure felt like it still. All my girlfriends were getting boyfriends. Not that it really meant anything back then, but I did not have one. And to top it off, the boy that I liked said he would have been my boyfriend if I had not had a big ugly scar on my face. He said I looked like a pumpkin someone tried to carve a scary face on. I felt my heart break with disappointment. I was teased and tormented for years over a silly scar on my face. Kids can be really mean! I think the emotional trauma I endured as a kid growing up, with a distinct mark on my face that stood out, separating me from the other kids was worse than the pain from the actual physical trauma of the accident. However, it is not just kids. Since I have been out of high school, adults try to make me feel like my scar takes away from me. I have had comments concerning my scar that were made to try to make me feel bad about myself.

It took a long time for me to get used to the scar on my face. I am not actually sure when it happened, but eventually I decided for myself that I was okay with having a scar. I was not going to let anyone make me feel bad about the fact that I have a scar on my face. In fact, to be honest, I really like my scar. I do not think it makes any difference now, except I would not be me without it. It might be a flaw to some. I, however, think that it helped make me who I am on the inside. It taught me how to be sensitive to things that might bother other people. It taught me firsthand how to look past the superficial parts of people and to get to know the person inside. And it helped teach me that it is more important and gratifying to truly like yourself, no matter how others feel about you. It has been a part of me for so long that I do not think I would feel right without it.

I would not trade my scar for anything now. In fact, in the last couple of years, my scar has helped me on more than one occasion to help boost someone else’s self-confidence. Sometimes all it takes is showing a little confidence in yourself and giving a little reassurance to someone else so he/she knows that differences have a meaning and a purpose, even if they cannot be seen at the moment, is enough to ease someone else’s pain. I think it is neat that I have seen my positive attitude about my scar help ease someone else’s insecurities. And I do not think there is a better feeling than when you feel good about yourself, except for when you can help others feel better about themselves. It just feels good when everybody is happy. Everybody deserves to have self-confidence, flaws and all, because nobody is perfect. And nobody deserves to have anyone make them feel bad about themselves. My name is Ashley Brewer; I am that girl with “the scar.”

